

Hinges & Tongs



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Winter, 2022

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If you found a cover in a dealer's "Better Junk" box with a TITANIC marking on it and mailed from France on March 3, 1912, would you buy it for \$10?

That was the start of an adventure for Tom Fortunato that began when he did just that in 1986 at a STEPEX show in Elmira. His RPA presentation on September 22nd explains that the cover literally "missed the boat," having been docketed with the ship's name by French postal works expecting it to sail on the famous vessel's mid-March 1912 maiden voyage. The only problem was that Titanic's trip was postponed until mid-April as the ship was still in its Northern Ireland dock getting retrofitted. Full details can be found on a website Tom created in 2012 at www.titaniccovers.com where he explains the whole story of what his now 36 years of research has unraveled.

To date, 21 covers with the same or similar TITANIC marking have become known, all but one of them sent to the "M. A. Winter Company" in Washington, D.C., a quack medicine producer. All were mailed between March 3-14 in France or Spain and received at the Winter firm between March 18 and 28. The senders were responding to local newspaper ads placed by Winter looking for locals to sell their products. The company stockpiled these envelopes for their records that were eventually

discarded, or perhaps were hoarded by workers recognizing the importance and possible profit from something bearing the name TITANIC.



Here is the cover Tom found in that box of "Better Junk". The Titanic marking, stamped vertically on the right side of the cover, caught his observant eye.



Back of the envelope receiving marks helped Tom sort out the history of his remarkable find.

So, what are these covers worth? Tom has documented decades of auction results ranging from \$650 to most recently \$6,836 each. Not bad for a \$10 piece of junk!

Editor's Note: After Tom's excellent presentation in September, I asked him if he could condense the story of this cover for Hinges and Tongs. Tom obliged, electing to write the preceding article in the third person.

Thank you, Tom

RPA Constitution, Election, and Dues

The votes have been received and counted and the RPA Constitution was approved by a tally of 43 to 1. Thanks to all who voted.

The comment written on the reverse of the "No" vote is worth mentioning: *"Having only three officers and no term limits means that three people can run the club as they please! Not Good."* Actually, that is four people, as the immediate past president will also be part of the Board.

It is a fair comment, and one that carries added importance as we now ask members to make nominations for President, Vice President and Officer-at-Large for 2023-2024. Now is the time for club members who wish to lead to come forward and run for office. Yes, self-nominations are acceptable. Make your intentions known at the November 10th meeting where elections will be discussed. Most elections over recent years have been uncontested, but competition is certainly welcomed!

A ballot will be prepared with votes counted through December 15th. There is a possibility that a vote can be run online, with alternate arrangements made for those who do not have Internet/email access. Details are being looked into for that.

Dues for calendar year 2023 continue to be collected. A \$20 check, payable to RPA, can be brought to a meeting or mailed to: RPA, P.O. Box 10206 Brighton Station, Rochester, NY 14610-0206.

RPA Meeting News

As in the past we are holding only a single meeting in November and December in deference to the holidays. These two meetings will be at the JCC of Greater Rochester, 1200 Edgewood Avenue in Brighton. Buy/sell/trade runs from 7:00-7:30 followed by a formal meeting at 7:30.

If you can't attend in person, join us via a Zoom connection using the following link and login details at 7:30 PM most meeting nights:

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/7117955142?pwd=amR3Z1Z3L0d4bkJaNHdJUjBmbjFaQT09>,

Meeting ID: 711 795 5142, Passcode: 9W3Mkg
Note that Zoom connections last 40 minutes. On disconnection, click the meeting link again to rejoin the meeting in progress.

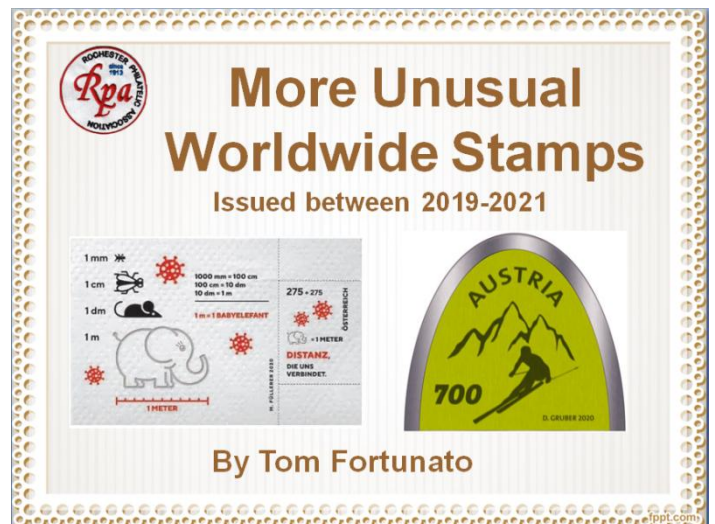
Upcoming RPA meetings:

November, 10th Gregg Philipson will present via Zoom from Austin, Texas.



The November meeting will also include important discussions on club leadership, elections, and our future meeting location.

December 8th



Our meeting location moving into 2023 is uncertain. We hope to land on a meeting place soon and will inform all members once that decision is reached (see page 5).

Regardless of our meeting site, we have lots of openings for programs for the second and fourth Thursday of all winter months. Just let club officers know if you would like to share something with your fellow RPA philatelists.

Imagine my Surprise by Florence Wright

It is small doubt that stamp collecting has broadened our knowledge of geography. I often log into a Zoom presentation by the British Empire Study Group to learn more about other stamps and events around the world.

When I saw a program coming up titled “The First Two Stamp Issues of Burma” (now Myanmar), I registered for that meeting. I don’t collect Burma stamps, but Norm (my hubby now deceased), did and so did my father. Besides, I was born in Burma! My parents were serving as Christian missionaries there in the late ‘20s and ‘30s.

So recently I watched with interest Mike Ley’s presentation on the early Burma stamps. Mike is retired and lives in Doniphan, Nebraska. He’s been collecting and exhibiting Burma stamps for the past 30 years, winning six multi-frame and two single frame grand awards showing Burmese subjects.

He’s currently the director of the Burma Myanmar Philatelic Study Circle (UK) and finishing up a second term as president of the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE). Prior to that, he served as AAPE Secretary for eight years.

While I was interested in the stamps, I was more interested in scrutinizing the covers! I was thinking I might see a familiar name or return address on this mail that had Burma stamps on it. And I did see some familiar names on a few of the envelopes.

After the program, I spoke up and told about my association with Burma. Mike asked the name of my father, and when I told him, he said “I have some covers with his name on them.”

Later we shared email addresses, and he sent me the picture at the top of the next column. What a feeling – to see my dad’s name and address on a letter from Burma from almost 80 years ago. The Japanese had already invaded Burma, so mail and communication were difficult.

An article in the publication, “The Burma Fantail,” (the Burma Philatelic Study Guide), noted that the

letter was postmarked from Simla, where the exile Burma Government was located.



Like I said, we learn a lot of history and geography while enjoying nostalgic moments by collecting stamps!

Bob Searjeant December 26, 1930 - July 20, 2022

Lifetime RPA member Bob Searjeant passed away on July 20, 2022 at the age of 91. He is survived by his wife Nancy, as well as a son, Daniel, and a daughter, Ann.

Bob was a regular at RPA meetings until about a decade ago when health issues restricted him to his home in Rochester. Despite being absent from meetings, Bob made a point to often tell us how much he enjoyed receiving Hinges and Tongs and he remained connected to RPA through the website. Over the years, he also made generous donations to the club as well.

Bob collected American classics, and his interests in collecting extended beyond stamps. He had an extensive collection of Currier and Ives prints, many of which he restored himself and for many years he operated an antique store in Mendon. Bob was also an accomplished bridge player and had achieved the level of Life Master in the American Contract Bridge Association.

Two Taverns, PA

An Infamous Claim to Fame

by Larry Rausch



Sometimes, a simple 19th century cover from the dollar box deserves a bit of research. The 1888 cover below postmarked Two Taverns, PA and addressed to an individual in Boston, Massachusetts struck me as one such cover. Two Taverns, PA is now a quiet unincorporated community in Adams County, Pennsylvania. The 2010 census lists a population of 1800. But there is much more to its history than a rather unique name.



Two Taverns played a significant role in the Civil War, specifically during the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863). On July 1 the Twelfth Corps of 8000 soldiers commanded by Henry W. Slocum moved to a tiny hamlet which is located less than five miles southeast of Gettysburg. For the men in the Corps, the order to temporarily camp at Two Taverns was puzzling. General George G. Meade, Slocum's commander, had advised Slocum that he would receive further instructions from General John F. Reynolds, so Slocum waited.

Unfortunately, Reynolds was killed on the morning of July 2nd. His successor, General Oliver O. Howard, sent a message to

Slocum that afternoon merely stating that the troops at Gettysburg were engaged with the enemy. A second message from Howard was still not clear. Unfortunately, Slocum failed to march to the sound of the guns. Finally, General Meade sent an aide to Slocum with orders to move. And so, sometime in mid-afternoon on July 2nd, the Twelfth Corps finally marched toward Gettysburg. Slocum received some criticism for not moving his division quickly enough and for being indecisive. However, despite their tardiness in arrival, the Twelfth Corps distinguished itself at Culp's Hill on July 2nd and 3rd.



Henry W. Slocum (1827-1894) was a native of Syracuse, New York before graduating seventh in his class of 43 at the United States military academy at West Point in 1852.

One might ask what would have happened had General Slocum continued marching to Gettysburg on July 1.

Gettysburg in United States philately



More RPA News

Membership Update and 2023 Dues

As of November 1 we have 81 RPA members, which includes 22 life members (for 25+ years of membership), 2 honorary members and 57 dues paying members. Based on everyone's birth year on file with us, the average RPA member in 2023 will be 73.3 years old, the youngest being Martha Savka (14 years old) and oldest being Roger Zaenglein (96 years old). Additional nonagenarians include Bruno Antonini, Ed Bailey, David Durham, Beverly Herzich, Chuck Petersdorf and Florence Wright.

Of the 57 dues paying members, 31 currently owe 2023 dues of \$20. Does that include you? If so, take care of it before the holidays! Send your check made out to "RPA" and send payment to: RPA, P.O. Box 10206 Brighton Station, Rochester, NY 14610-0206.

RPA Meeting Location in 2023

Unfortunately our time at the Jewish Community Center is coming to an end as of December 31. Room rent in 2023 has increased to \$125 per meeting (although they are willing to decrease it to \$100) and monthly storage fees jumps to \$75.

Searching has taken time, and as the year comes to the close we have two prospects. The Irondequoit Library is very welcoming, however they will not allow us to sell any items during our meetings until a pending litigation is resolved and their Board approves selling again. We're exploring a second option now with the senior living "The Village at Unity" in Greece. They have a large Community Room that looks promising and are awaiting their room rules and regulations to confirm no conflicts with our current meeting activities exist. We have been told there may be rare occasions at the Village where we may be put into an alternate room, similar to circumstances at the JCC these past few years.

The hope was that our 2023 moving plans would be resolved by now, but all good things take time. You'll know as soon as this is settled!

RPA Member News

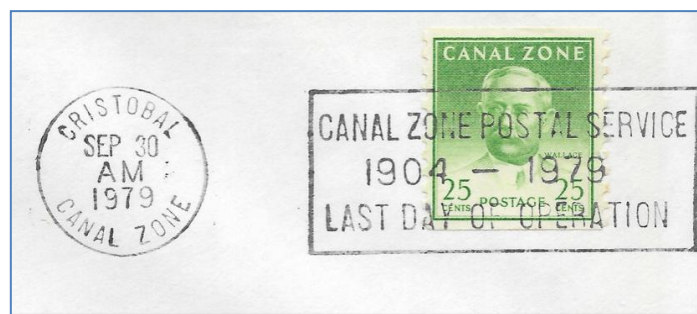
RPA member David Farnsworth informs us that he has published a presentation on the philately of the Canal Zone on the online site of the APS Canal Zone Study Unit. The link to the website is: www.canalzonestudygroup.com/onlinedocuments.php

At the site you will find slides of *A History of Panama and Its Canal in Forty-Two Postage Stamps and Seven Picture Postcards*. There is also a companion document with speaking notes. Both are now available for free download at the Canal Zone Study Group.

David reviews the history of the building and operation of the Panama canal through postcards and philately and then discusses five eras of postage stamps printed in the Canal Zone from 1904 until 1979.



From 1904: Columbia map stamp overprinted with both Panama (vertical) and Canal Zone (horizontal)



Until 1979 – This cover is postmarked on the final day of US-run post offices in the Canal Zone

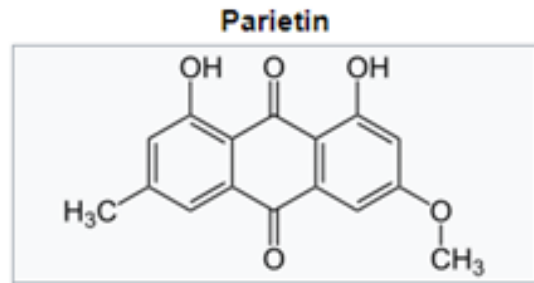
The slides and script are an edited and somewhat improved version of the talk that Dave presented to RPA on March 11, 2021 via Zoom and described on pages 2 and 3 of the [May-July 2021, Hinges & Tongs](#).

Lichen for the Licking by Fred Haynes

As many members know, Paul Brach and I like to stroll around the area parks and preserves looking for flowers, fungi and anything else that might interest us. Often, we see things that remind us of stamps we have in our collections. Twice this past spring, it was a species of particularly colorful lichen that caught our attention. We both knew we had seen a stamp very much like the orange lichen we had found, but it was not until we got home that we could accurately identify its species or find the Belarus stamp we had seen.

Lichens are composite organisms consisting of both algae and multiple forms of fungi living in a symbiotic relationship. **The fungus provides roots that access water and necessary minerals while the algae component uses its photosynthetic ability to produce food.** The darker orange cup-shaped features in all these orange sunburst lichen are called apothecia. They are part of the fungal component of the lichen and act as fruiting bodies for generating and distributing spores.

Most lichen species are green, blue or gray, but this species is colored by parietin, a pigment that is able to absorb blue light.



Sunburst lichen grows preferably on deciduous wood (as we saw it), but is known on rocks also. It likes nitrogen, so it is often found in woods adjacent to fertilized farm fields. The blue-gray lichen with the black apothecia in the photograph from Black Creek Park is probably star rosette lichen (*Physcia stellaris*). To our knowledge this species has not yet found its way onto a postage stamp.

I know, probably a bit more than you expected to read about lichen when you opened Hinges and Tongs. Perhaps you have seen something when out and about that reminds you of stamps in your collection. Send me the pictures and share your experience with others.



sunburst lichen *Xanthoria parietina*
Iroquois NWR, NW Genesee County



Belarus, June 2019



Black Creek Park, Chili